

**Testimony of Scott H. Trepanier, School Principal of the Hickory Street School,  
Norwich, CT - Executive Board Member SERAC  
concerning funding for Regional Action Councils in**

H.B. No. 6824 - AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING  
JUNE THIRTIETH 2017, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR AND OTHER  
PROVISIONS RELATED TO REVENUE

*Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services - March 6, 2015*

Senator Bye, Representative Walker, Senator Gerratana, Representative Dillon and members of the Appropriations subcommittee, my name is Scott Trepanier. I am offering testimony in strong opposition to the proposed cuts to the regional action councils and strongly urge you to reverse the decision to cut funding to the RACs in Connecticut.

My name is Scott Trepanier and I am the Principal of the Hickory Street School in Norwich, CT. The Hickory Street School is a special education school for elementary age students who are emotionally disturbed. The school provides a self-contained classroom setting and group counseling for 24 students who are currently unable to be successful in the classroom because of the high number of adverse childhood experiences they have encountered in their early years of life.

Since I became the Principal of the Hickory Street School last year I have begun to witness the dramatic increase of emotionally disturbed elementary students entering our public school system. Recently, I directed my social workers to SERAC for group counseling materials that are now being utilized to teach social skills and coping strategies to my students. I am also very excited to have SERAC provide training and programming for my staff and the families of my students. This additional support from SERAC is an important piece of my school's program. The ultimate goal is to get these students back on the path to attending a regular public school and become respected citizens in the city of Norwich. My concern is that if we do not provide enough of the right types of services and educational programs to this population these students will not be able to function as adults in our society. If we were to give up on these students they will most likely drop out of school and they will be unable to find a job. These students will also be more likely to become addicted to drugs, and one day have a number of children of their own who will have the same set of problems. The school can't do it alone, we need support from other agencies like SERAC. Properly funding SERAC will ensure that their services continue to fully operate and assist in putting children and adults back on the path to being successful in life.

SERAC is currently providing many programs, like mentioned above, across New London County that include youth services, youth leadership programs, suicide prevention, drug awareness and prevention, and anti-bullying programs. As a school leader and member of their Executive Board, I have seen clear evidence that their programs are making a difference.

Please reevaluate the decision to make cuts to the SERAC and the other RACs across the State. These organizations are making a difference. By funding them now we will save money and lives in the future!

Sincerely,

*Scott H. Trepanier*

Scott H. Trepanier

